



m.m. memos

Margaret Miller

Dad, the uncomplainer

I couldn't write this in time for Father's Day.

Well, that's not quite true. I could have written it before almost any of the Father's Days that have occurred in the decade-plus that I've been filling this space.

But it never happened, maybe because of our family tendency to downplay such occasions and maybe because of my dad's tendency to stay out of the limelight.

This was the year, though — the admiration I had known through the years had grown as I watched him once again turn life upside down and once again come up with good cheer. But there it was, the day I had to write whatever was going to appear for Father's Day. And there was my dad in the hospital, maybe or maybe not preparing for surgery at the age of almost 88.

Now he has successfully bounced through his second operation in three years, and now I can put into print a few words that should have been said a lot of Father's Days ago.

MY DAD always has amazed me for his ability to take whatever life hands him, almost literally without complaint. He dreamed as a youth of being a doctor, and he would have made a fine one in the days when bedside manner counted.

But there was the matter of earning his way through college, and then World War I, and by the time that was

over he decided it was late in the game for returning to school. No GI educational benefits then, but I never heard him rail against his fate.

He settled for working as an accountant and added up long columns of figures for the rest of his working life. He brought the office home with him and asked only that we not worry audibly about his working all night.

During the depression he knew the humiliation of joblessness and homelessness and moved in with his wife's family. I never remember anything but faith that things would get better.

When they did and he got a job again, he kept it until he was 72. No pensions for him either. And no complaints.

I'VE WONDERED on occasion how he put up with his kids in their obstreperous years. One of them, I'm sure, caused more than her share of heartache with opinionated arguing. I hardly remember even a sharp word. He lost his wife just as their time to themselves was beginning.

When he remarried, he changed his lifestyle completely and endeared himself to everyone in his new world. Never a voiced indication of transitional difficulties.

Tirelessly, unflinchingly, always cheerfully, he cared for his second wife during the years when her health declined. He didn't even feel sorry for himself when his sight failed and so did hers. He just did the best he could with a world of closing-in darkness.



Yellow daffodils

The kindergarten in St. Paul Lutheran School turned into a sea of yellow daffodils when youngsters opted for flower costumes in lieu of cap and gowns. From left, Michelle Seaman, Margo Byandt,

Amy Gerisch, Casey Lapworth, Dee Lorenz and Shannon Sarnowsky performed in the kindergarten graduation ceremonies, which is a tradition in teacher Irene Sutter's classes.

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